



Representing the communities of Agoura, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Encino, Hidden Hills, Lake Sherwood, Malibu, Oak Park, Pacific Palisades, Port Hueneme, portions of Sherman Oaks, portions of Oxnard, Santa Monica, Tarzana, Topanga, portions of Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills

July 2010

## Interior Secretary Comes to the 41<sup>st</sup> AD

It is a matter of immense pride for me to have almost the entirety of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area form the heart of my district. Earlier this month, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and some of his top-level staff took time away from the demands of the Gulf oil disaster to visit the Santa Monicas as part of the President's "Americas Great Outdoors" listening tours.



**Left to Right:** Assistant Secretary Will Shafroth of the Department of the Interior, Assistant Secretary Jo-Allen Darcy of the Army for Civil Works, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Chair Nancy Sutley of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, Director Ruth Coleman of California State Parks, Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, Executive Director Joe Edmiston of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.



Secretary Salazar, a fifth-generation product of the American West himself, and whose family members were early settlers in Colorado, was very interested in learning more about the Santa Monica Mountains and what makes the cooperative conservation approach used here among Federal, state and local entities so successful in linking their separate parks and open spaces so seamlessly. This strategy has become a model for replication across the U.S. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is regarded as a “flagship” park in the U.S., and it’s right here to enjoy, no more than 30 minutes from anywhere in the 41<sup>st</sup> AD.

You can share your thoughts on “America’s Great Outdoors” by visiting the Department of the Interior’s website at: <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/>.

## State Budget Negotiations Continue

Legislative leaders are working on a daily basis to try and craft the framework for a 2010-11 state budget that will close our structural deficit of over \$19 billion, keep the state providing essential services, and that can obtain the necessary 2/3 bipartisan vote for passage. Year after year, we have seen the budget process tied in knots and seriously delayed as political scorecards drive decisions that will have long-term and possibly permanent impacts on our state.



I have very deep concerns about what is happening to education in California with cuts that have amounted to \$ 17 billion just in the past two years. For a state that boasts the eighth largest economy in the world, it is embarrassing that California ranks near the bottom nationally in per-pupil spending and has nearly a 30 percent dropout rate.

For years, study after study has pointed to an inadequate, inequitable and inefficient school financing system, but we have shied away from tackling the issue. The very first bill I introduced in the Legislature was to reform California's school finance system. For the past three years, I have carried legislation to overhaul this unfair system so funding streams can be directed to where they are needed most. I have held hearings inviting educational experts to testify about the inequitable system that lacks adequate funding. Last year, the Legislature approved AB 8, which would have convened a working group to recommend a new system of school finance, but the governor vetoed it. This year, I carried AB 2335, which requires the State Department of Education to start making changes to the school finance system and make other recommendations to improve school funding.

The lawsuit filed this month by four grassroots school advocacy groups and other litigation filed earlier this year against the state brings all these issues to a head at the worst economic time in 60 years. But it may be what is needed at this point.

Last year, the Legislature approved my Assembly Concurrent Resolution 54, which is a formal statement from the Legislature to Washington, D.C. that California's per-pupil spending must be brought up to or above the national average. In the interim, there are things we must do here at the state level.

The first step is to reform our obsolete finance system to ensure our education dollars are being spent wisely, efficiently and are being directed to where they are most needed so that all students, rich or poor, English-speaking or not, have the resources they need to meet the state's stringent academic standards and the opportunity to achieve their dreams. This is what brought me to the Legislature, and what I will continue to work on every day I'm in office.

## **School Construction Funds Running Out**

The state's resources for new school construction and modernization are quickly dwindling and soon there will be no money for building or updating school facilities. I



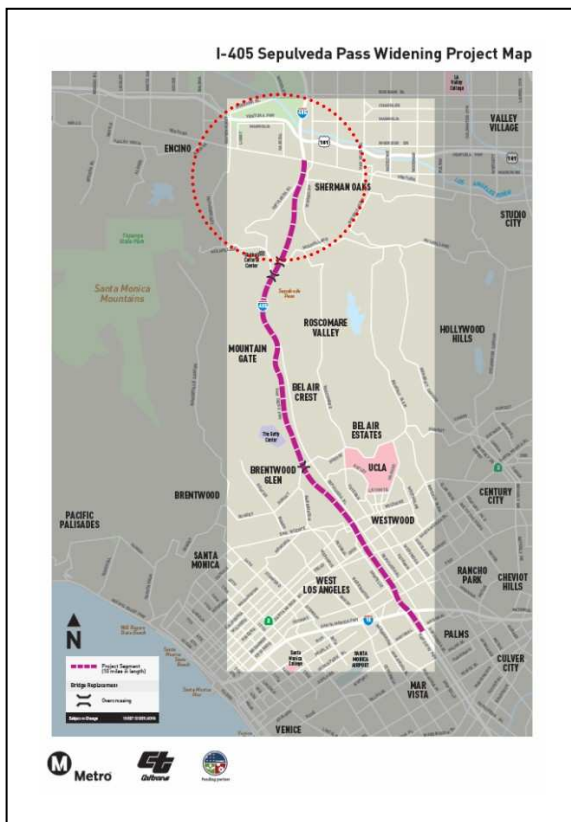
recently amended a bill, AB 220, to place an education facilities bond on the November ballot.

Recent polls clearly show that voters support education. School districts have local bond authority and 75 percent of the local bonds on the June ballot won approval, confirming that support, even in these difficult financial times.

One of the first impressions we get of a school is its physical appearance. If it looks dilapidated, the immediate reaction is that it must not be a good school or a clean school or a safe school. That can negatively impact a student's motivation to study hard, and even to come to school at all.

As a member of the State Allocation Board, which allocates state resources for new school construction and modernization, I am acutely aware of dwindling funds. The last bond, Proposition 1D, was passed in 2006. Funds for the remaining \$132 million for new construction projects will be allocated within the next two months, and the rest will be depleted in a few more months. In the meantime, higher education allocations have already been exhausted.

A new construction bond will not only benefit students and school staff, but also our economy by generating hundreds of thousands of construction-related jobs. Some believe that now may not be the time to seek new bond money. Unfortunately, our children get just one shot at an education before they are grown and expected to support themselves. We owe it to them at least to have a public discussion on what their schools will look like.



## 405 Project and the 41<sup>st</sup> AD – Update

For the neighbors in Sherman Oaks near the Valley Vista offramp, the 405 widening project is about to get a lot more active.

The work intensifies with the prep work for the demolition of the three homes that will be removed for the new offramp. The removal work on the homes will take place during the day from 7AM-3:30PM and should take about two weeks.

Brush clearing and construction of the replacement soundwall and retaining wall are upcoming, but the date of that work is still to be determined.

My office has continued to monitor the efforts and communicate with Metro staff on the project and the Community Relations and Project Teams have committed to a follow-up meeting with the neighbors in Valley Vista to address the issues

raised at the neighborhood meeting in March. They will share revised designs and the schedule for the rest of the work once it has all been worked out over the next few months.

Metro Community Relations has set up a hotline for the project which you can call for daily updates or to get the number for the 24 hour on-call community relations representative for emergencies related to the project. That number is: 213-922-3665. Check out the project website where you can get up to the minute information and also sign-up for updates at [www.metro.net/I-405](http://www.metro.net/I-405).

# Legislative Update

We are at the point in the legislative calendar when all bills must be out of their "house of origin." Some Assembly bills are now pending in the Senate and others have already passed out of both houses and been signed into law by the Governor.

## **Here's an update on some of my key bills:**

- **AB 139, Flexibility in Locations for Board of Supervisor hearings**

Democracy works best through active participation by its citizens. Yet a law on the books for over 100 years requires county boards of supervisors to convene their meetings only in the county seat, making it more difficult in large counties, many rural or mountainous, for residents to attend and be heard. AB 139 will allow boards to hold regular meetings in other locations around the county to facilitate more involvement by the public and provide them with more access to their elected representatives.

*Governor has signed into law.*

- **AB 1374, Streamlining Adult Education Teacher**

This bill recasts and streamlines the Designated Subjects Adult Education teaching credential as a three-year credential that specifies different requirements based on whether the subjects taught are nonacademic or academic, and makes other technical changes. Why is this important? A large percentage of those attending adult education programs are English learners, immigrants pursuing citizenship, and high school dropouts who want to earn their diploma or pass the GED exam. By reducing the experience requirement from five years to three years and streamlining the process, it will now be easier for qualified candidates to fill California's need for more adult education teachers.

*Governor has signed into law.*

- **AB 1950, Greater Accountability Standards for Charter Schools**

While I believe that charter schools have a role to play in our public school system, California's 814 publicly-funded charter schools must be held to the same strict accountability standards to ensure the best possible education for their students, including those with the greatest needs in low-income neighborhoods.

This sensible and simple expectation has set off a storm of opposition from charter school advocates that are resisting more transparency in the way they use taxpayer dollars and more accountability on how well their students actually perform. The standards proposed in AB 1950 are directly aligned with the original intent of the Legislature in establishing charter schools – to accomplish improved student learning greater than that of neighborhood public schools.

*Passed out of Assembly. I pulled the bill from the Senate Education Committee that was about to kill it.*

- **AB 1984, Child Nutrition in Child Care Facilities**

Good nutrition needs to start at the earliest possible age, including limiting consumption of sugary and high-fat drinks that we know contribute to childhood obesity and associated health problems. AB1984 will require licensed child-care providers to serve milk that contains no more than 1% fat, limit juice to one daily serving of 100% juice, prohibit drinks with added sweeteners, and require fresh water to be available throughout the day and during meals.

*Passed out of Assembly. In Senate Appropriations Committee.*

- **AB 1998, Single Use Bag Ban**

We are taught to “reduce, reuse and recycle,” in that order, because we can’t recycle our way to a better world, especially the 19 billion plastic bags that are thrown away every year, with only about 5% of them being recycled. The single-use bag ban would make California first in the nation to take this step, although India, China and Bangladesh are already ahead of us. It would be phased in over a two-year period. Shoppers who forget to bring reusable bags to the store will be able to purchase post-consumer compostable recycled paper bags for not less than 5¢ at the check stand. I’m very pleased to see the bill moving, and with such broad statewide support.

*Passed out of Assembly. In Senate Appropriations Committee.*

- **AB 2598, Sea Level Rise**

The debate is over about climate change and the rise in sea level from warming temperatures. California must be aggressively proactive and take the long-view in all its coastal planning, recognizing the changes to where the sea and shore meet that are already occurring, and what science tells us we can reasonably foresee in the years ahead.

AB 2598 starts with state lands grantees, including our major ports and coastal airports. It will require grantees to submit a sea level action plan by July 1, 2011 to the Natural Resources Agency, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, and the State Lands Commission. Those plans must include an assessment of the impact of sea level rise, an estimate of the impact’s financial cost, and strategies to prevent or mitigate damage to existing development and infrastructure. It also provides several options that would not involve substantial cost to the state lands grantees.

*Passed out of Assembly. In Senate Appropriations Committee.*



## Photo Gallery



*Beginning Fourth of July morning in the Santa Monica parade fighting the "Bag Monster" that Assemblymember Brownley intends to banish from California forever with her single-use bag ban legislation, AB 1998.*

*Assemblymember Brownley's third year participating in the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July parade that afternoon, with Cleveland Browns Football Hall of Fame great, Jim Brown, as Grand Marshal.*





*Honoring five high school student recipients of Democratic Women's Club of the Conejo Valley scholarships for their outstanding essays based on Anne Frank's inspiring quote: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."*

*District staff participates in ribbon cutting ceremony for new Trancas Canyon Park, a beautiful new and environmentally-friendly neighborhood park in Malibu that includes a state-of-the-art dog park up on the hill.*





## ***Committee and Legislative Appointments***

Chair, Assembly Education Committee  
Chair, Select Committee on Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Chair, Select Committee on Cleanup of Santa Susana Field Laboratory

Member:  
Assembly Budget Committee  
Assembly Judiciary Committee  
Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
Budget Subcommittee #2 – Education Finance  
Budget Subcommittee #4 – State Administration  
Select Committee on Community Colleges  
Select Committee on Domestic Violence  
Select Committee on Improving State Government  
Select Committee on Lowering California's High School Dropout Rates  
Select Committee on Ports  
Joint Select Committee on Reform

Member, State Allocation Board  
California Commission on the Status of Women

Legislative Liaison, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission  
Legislative Participant, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

### **HOW TO REACH ME:**

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